

Act 3

While **TITANIA** is asleep onstage, the clowns—
BOTTOM, QUINCE, FLUTE, SNUG, SNOUT, and STARVELING—enter.

QUINCE

Right on time. This is the perfect place to rehearse. This clearing will be the stage, and this hawthorn bush will be our dressing room. Let's put on our play exactly as we'll perform it for the duke.

BOTTOM

There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisbe that will never work. First of all, Pyramus has to take out a sword to kill himself, which the ladies in the audience won't be able to stand. What should we do about that?

SNOUT

By God, that's a real problem, it's true.

STARVELING

I think we'll have to leave out all the killing, come to think of it.

BOTTOM

Not at all! I've got a plan that will fix everything.

SNOUT

Won't the ladies be scared of the lion?

STARVELING

I'm really worried about that.

BOTTOM

No, we can just announce the actor's name, and let his face show through the lion costume, and have him say something himself.

QUINCE

you know, Pyramus and Thisbe meet by moonlight.

BOTTOM

Someone should play the part of Wall. He can have some plaster or clay or limestone or something on him to show the audience he's a wall. He can hold his fingers in a V-shape like this, and Pyramus and Thisbe can whisper to each other through that little crack.

QUINCE

Speak, Pyramus.—

Thisbe, come forward.

Bottom exits.

Robin This is the strangest Pyramus that I have seen.

FLUTE (Thisbe)

Am I supposed to talk now? **FLUTE**

(as THISBE) Most radiant Pyramus, you are as white as a lily

ROBIN enters with **BOTTOM**, with a donkey's head instead of a human head.

BOTTOM

(as PYRAMUS) If I were handsome, my lovely Thisbe, I would still want only you.

Flute Help! It's a monster! We're being haunted. Run, everyone, run!

QUINCE, FLUTE, SNUG, SNOUT, STARVELING and Robin exit.

BOTTOM

Why are they running away? This is some joke of theirs to scare me.

QUINCE

God bless you, Bottom, God bless you. You've been changed. Reborn.

TITANIA

(waking up) What angel is this who's waking me up from my bed of flowers?

Please sing again, sweet human. I love to listen to your voice,

BOTTOM

I don't think you've got much of a reason to love me.

TITANIA

Don't bother wishing you could leave this forest, because you're going to stay here whether you want to or not. I'm no ordinary fairy. I rule over the summer, and I love you.

Four fairies—PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, andMUSTARDSEED—

enter

ALL

Where should we go?

TITANIA

Be kind and polite to this gentleman. Follow him around.

They all exit.

OBERON

I wonder if Titania is awake yet, and if she is, I wonder what the first thing she saw was. Whatever it is, she must be completely in love with it now.

ROBIN enters

ROBIN

My mistress Titania is in love with a monster. The stupidest one, who played Pyramus in their pl transformed into someone with a donkey's head. At that exact moment, Titania woke up and immediately fell in love with him, an ass.

DEMETRIUS and **HERMIA** enter

OBERON

(speaking so that only ROBIN can hear) Step aside. Here's the Athenian coming now.

DEMETRIUS

Why are you so rude to someone who loves you so much? Save that kind of harsh language for your worst enemy.

HERMIA

I'm only scolding you now, but I should treat you much worse,

DEMETRIUS

You're getting all worked up over a misunderstanding. I didn't kill Lysander. ?As far as I know, he's not even dead.

HERMIA

Then please tell me he's all right.

OBERON

(to ROBIN) What have you done? You've made a mistake and put the love-juice on someone else, someone who was truly in love. Because of your mistake someone's true love must have turned bad, instead of this man's false love being turned into a true love.

OBERON

Go around the forest, moving faster than the wind, and make sure you find

Helena of Athens

ROBIN

I go, I go, look at me go—faster than an arrow

OBERON

(putting flower juice on DEMETRIUS 's eyelids)

ROBIN

Helena is nearby, boss.

LYSANDER to Helena

I wasn't thinking clearly when I made those promises to her.

HELENA

And I don't believe you're thinking clearly now, as you break those promises.

DEMETRIUS

(waking up) Oh Helena, you goddess, you divine and perfect nymph! What can I compare your eyes to? Crystal isn't as clear as they are.

HELENA

Damn it! I see you're all determined to gang up on me for a few laughs. If you had any manners at all, you wouldn't treat me like this. Can't you just hate me, as I know you do?

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, keep your Hermia. I don't want her. If I ever loved her, all that love is gone now. My love for her was temporary. Now I'll love Helena forever.